



History–Social Science: Identifying Family and Cultural Components in the History–Social Science Foundations

Focus Statement

Students hear from guest speakers or interview community members to learn more about different family, community, and cultural experiences that may impact children’s development of competencies described in the history–social science foundations.

Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Student Learning Outcomes

The Curriculum Alignment Project’s (CAP) lower division eight courses and student learning outcomes are mapped onto each instructional guide learning experience. See Appendix A for the specific student learning outcomes, objectives, and examples of course content and topics for the courses listed below.

- Child Growth and Development
- Child, Family and Community
- Introduction to Curriculum
- Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Observation and Assessment
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience

Instructional Methodologies

- Brainstorming
- Class discussion
- Development of resource tool
- Interview
- Pairs or small groups
- Panel/guest speakers
- Personal reflection
- Reflective discussion



- Short paper or report

California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

The Faculty Initiative Project will undertake a comprehensive process in the future to map the content of the instructional guides to the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division's *California Early Childhood Educator Competencies*. The "Competency Areas to Consider" below are listed in this instructional guide as a preliminary exploration of how particular competency areas might be addressed through these learning experiences.

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Professionalism



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History–Social Science Domain:
Identifying Family and Cultural Components in the
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Before You Start

Children form a remarkably diverse population. They vary in their temperamental qualities, personality, family background, cultural heritage and values, economic resources, family structure, and other ways. Children in California are especially diverse in their cultural of origin. Culture is associated with family values and practices, language, and other characteristics that are directly related to the meaning of these foundations and their application to individual children, especially children who are English-language learners or from special populations . . . (*California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 3*, p. 6).

In this learning experience, students will become more familiar with the diversity of family and cultural backgrounds and experiences that children bring to their preschool programs by reading and discussing sections from the history–social science domain of the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 3*. It is suggested that speakers be invited to provide additional information on considerations for children in specific circumstances such as being in foster care, not having stable housing, or having a disability or special health care need. It may also be useful to have one or two speakers who are leaders in local ethnic communities who can address some of the issues related to the linguistic and cultural diversity of families who live nearby.

It may be helpful to provide copies of the history–social science foundations and the introductory pages from the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 3* (pp. 1–7) to the speakers. Ask them to provide an overview of the children and families they work with, highlighting factors that specifically relate to some of the foundations and that students should consider in fostering children’s development in those foundations. If the instructor decides to have students prepare some questions for the panel, let the speakers know that there will also be questions from the class.

Students are asked to select questions for the panel by voting with sticky dots, so instructors could provide some kind of small stickers that students can use. Pieces of masking or other tape could also be used.



Information Delivery



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As suggested in Learning Experience 3 of this domain, “Piecing Together the History–Social Science Domain Content Puzzle,” it is important that students have a basic familiarity with the content of the strands, substrands, and foundations. If this is the first time students will be working with the history–social science domain, the information on the following pages from the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 3* can provide this background:

- Introduction (p. 1)
- Scope of the Foundations (pp. 1–4), especially the following descriptions of the strands found on page 3:
- Self and Society (beginning to identify with how their family does things and understand that other families and people have ways of doing things that are different or similar to what their family does)
- Civics (how to live with others and how rules work, such as taking turns to go down the slide)
- History (events that happened in the past, even before they were born, such as when their mommy was a little girl)
- Geography (the location of familiar places in relation to each other, such as knowing the way to preschool or that the park is across the street from the grocery store) and the different kinds of places where people live
- Ecology (learning to take care of earth and animals [for example, not wasting water])
- Economics (a beginning understanding of money and the exchange of things and services, such as groceries purchased at the store)
- Purpose of the Foundations (pp. 4–5)
- Understanding the Foundations (pp. 5–6)
- Glossary (p. 39)

In this learning experience, students will also focus on the material on pages 5–6, beginning with the last paragraph on page 5 and continuing through the two columns on page 6.

Active Learning

Getting it started

Begin by asking students to read the paragraphs on pages 5–6 about the cultural, ethnic, and racial implications related to children’s development and the history–social science foundations. Depending



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on the size of the class, students could discuss the paragraphs in small groups or as a whole group. If the students work in groups, allow time for them to share highlights from their discussions with the whole class. Some of the concepts presented may be new to students, so it is important to provide opportunities for questions, differing interpretations to be discussed, and key points to be clarified.

Keeping it going

Explain to students that a panel will be addressing the class on family and cultural considerations for some specific populations of children and families. As preparation for the panel, ask students to develop questions for the panelists related to their review and discussion of the foundations. Choose to have students develop questions individually or in groups and then come up with a final list for the panelists. One way to develop this list of questions is to write all the questions on chart paper or a whiteboard and then have students vote. Students are given three to five sticky dots each and then vote by placing their dots by the questions they choose. They can spread their dots among several questions or put all dots by one question—the choice is theirs. After deciding how many questions it is feasible to ask the panelists, the questions with the most dots are selected.

Online Options

If the class has document-sharing capability, the development and selection of the questions can be done online.

Putting it together

Introduce the panel and explain that the panelists will first present an overview of the children and families they work with, including an emphasis on characteristics that they feel are critical for understanding children's backgrounds and experiences prior to and during their preschool years and the relationship of those characteristics to certain foundations in the history–social science domain. For example, children whose families are experiencing homelessness or temporary, irregular, or inadequate housing or children who are in foster care may not have had the same opportunities as children in more stable and consistent home environments for developing cultural, ethnic, and racial identity; learning to create and maintain relationships with a few significant adults and peers; anticipating events; becoming familiar with places regularly visited or routes; or learning about their family history.



Instructors may want to preface the guest speakers' presentations by reminding students that the purpose of these presentations is to help them recognize and appreciate the diversity of the children and families in their programs as well as understand how certain characteristics may be related to specific foundations. Because some of the panelists' remarks may remind students of similar experiences or circumstances in their own lives, it may be helpful to acknowledge this and plan a time when students can share some of their experiences.

After all the panelists have presented, the students can then ask the panelists the questions they developed earlier. Instructors may wish to let different students ask the questions or ask for a volunteer to moderate the question-and-answer part of the panel discussion.

Taking it further

After the panelists have left, facilitate a class discussion on the panel presentation. The following questions are suggested:



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- What statement or response from the panelists really caught your attention?
- What was new or surprising? What reaffirmed or caused you to think differently about the impact of different circumstances such as homelessness, foster care, linguistic and cultural diversity, and disability on children's acquisition of the skills and knowledge described in the history–social science domain foundations?
- What responses to the prepared questions help you better understand how children's background and experiences relate to the foundations in the history–social science domain?
- How might you apply the information from the panelists in supporting children's development in the history–social science domain foundations?

Another approach/way

Instead of having a panel presentation, instructors could ask students to identify and interview community members who have some of the experience and expertise suggested for the guest speakers. Students could do the interviews individually or in pairs or small groups. The information from the interviews could be shared through class presentations or written summaries.



It might be helpful for the class to develop a list of questions that all students will use in their interviews. The process described in the “Keeping it going” section could be used.

Online Options

If the class has file sharing and online-discussion capability, students could post written summaries of their interviews and then have an instructor lead online discussion of the reflection questions after they review their classmates’ interviews.

Reflection

The following questions can be used for individual reflection by students or a class discussion:



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- What information from your reading or the panel presentation (or interviews) stands out for you?
- What new perspective or understanding do you have about the relationship between children’s family and cultural experiences and the history–social science domain foundations?
- Which aspects of children’s family and cultural backgrounds do you think are the most significant in terms of children developing some of the skills and knowledge described in the history–social science foundations?
- Because of what you learned from your reading and the panelists (or interviews), what will you do differently when working with children and talking with families about these foundations?

Deeper Understanding



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Ask students to select one of the panel questions for further exploration. They can then go to the Bibliographic Notes for the history–social science domain and identify any sections that relate to the question. When reviewing these sections, suggest that students consider these questions:

- How would you answer the question you selected based on your reading?
- What research findings address the question?
- How does this material support or differ from the panelists’ responses to the question?
- How has this review of some research increased your understanding of the relationship between family, culture, and the history–social science foundations?



- What additional questions do you still have?

Students can then write a two- to three-page paper on their responses. These papers can be shared with other students as part of a class resource compendium.